

Rembão, Alberto

1271

*The Growing Church
and its
Changing Environment
in Latin America*

Pam
Lat. Amer.



PART II

FROM MISSIONS TO MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA
*Study Conference of the Committee on Cooperation in
Latin America*

BUCK HILL FALLS, PA.

NOVEMBER 6-8, 1958



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Columbia University Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/growingchurchits00remb>

Twenty-five propositions regarding The Growing Church and its Changing Environment

*An address by Dr. Alberto Remba, Editor of LA
NUEVA DEMOCRACIA, and Research Consultant
of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America.*

1 Protestantism and Gospel in Latin America. Protestantism is a historical event. The Gospel is an eternal intervention. Protestantism is human; Gospel, divine. Protestantism is the cultural aspect of religion; Gospel, its transcendental pith. The former is form; the latter, essence. Protestantism is a limited concept; Gospel a realization forever incomplete.

2 Protestantism is both Church and Fatherland. Historically it coincides with the appearance of national States destined to negate the oneness of the Holy Roman Empire. The Reformation divided not only the Church but also the State. Protestantism relates Politics to God and produces democracy in the sense of government of the people, meaning the direct action of the members of the "Independent" congregations of Cromwell's times. Church conditions Fatherland, but also Fatherland conditions Church. The two become functions of culture in a pluralistic sense. Church-Fatherland becomes one culture among many. Culture is, with T. S. Eliot, for instance: "the incarnation of the religion of the (English) people. . . There is an aspect in which we could see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to grave, from morning to night, and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture. . . And culture includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta. . . The Twelfth of August, a Cup Final, the Dog Races, the Pin Table, the Dart Board, Wensleydale Cheese, Boiled Cabbage cut into sections, Beetroot in vinegar, 19th Century Gothic Churches, and the music of Elgar. . . and. . . what is part of our culture is also a part of our *lived religion*". (Quoted by W. L. Miller in "Religion and the American Way of Life").

Similarly, here in the United States, in times of crisis the normal tendency seems to be to equate Fatherland with God, and the American Way of Life with Christianity. Witness the theological crusade against Communism and the ideological excess involved in booklets like "Christ or Lenin", thus counterpointing the eternal with the temporary. Here one can see the recent tendency to use Christianity as a means, as an army corps in the struggle of Capitalistic democracy with Russian communism.

Be that as it may such a culture has served as container and carrier of the Gospel. When the Gospel is carried abroad, it goes in an ethnic vehicle which is the sending church incorporated in the human instrument which is the missionary.

One makes much of the labors of the Roman Catholic missionaries who came to Hispanic America in the 16th Century to convert the heathen Indians. But the records show that in those days "to christianize" meant to convert the aborigines into subjects of the Emperor Charles the V. The religion preached and taught was to be a means to the civic end in view. A "Christian" meant a subject of the King. A "Christian" may mean even to-day an inhabitant of the realm.

3 The Anational Christ. However, it would be inexact to say that the Gospel carried by American missionaries into Hispanic America was an Anglo-Saxon Gospel. The human vehicle -- and the churchly institution, as Protestantism -- were European, but their Message was non-historic, eternal, divine. This point refers to the presence of culture and the part it takes in the redemptive process. The humanistic aroma present in the theological air leads one to place the accent on the anthropological and to think of the Gospel as culture, which it is not. The Gospel as the sum total of available Spirit is, rather, the stuff cultures are made of, but it is not culture. Preaching, which is the *sine qua non* of the Gospel, is not *transculturation* in the old fashion sense of "missions" as transplanting of denominational patterns. Further, it is not *acculturation*, as in the new notion of *one* enterprise or "Mission". It is not a give and take between sending Boards and receiving communities. The Gospel is something always new, for Gospel is not the process of the ages by which God makes himself available to man through different stages of culture. (That would be natural religion only). The Gospel is the self-renovating reference to Something which happened just once and only once in

history. "The manifestation or appearance of the Christian God happens in one unique Being who although human is unique and exclusive in his class: Jesus Christ Our Lord" (Hegel).

4 *The irrelevance of culture.* The so called cultural burden of the missionary is negligible. The North American missionaries of the 19th Century were culture-burdened. They were perfect exemplars of the Church-Fatherland duality: one hundred per cent American on the one side and two hundred per cent sectarian Protestant on the other. And yet they stand today unsurpassed as containers and carriers of the Good News. Their Americanism and their sectarianism did not interfere with their bacteriological function. As a matter of record, Americanism and sectarianism were positive elements in the sowing of the Seed. The foreignness and if you please the narrowness of those servants good and faithful were like springboards for formidable *tours de force*.

5 *The missionary as a foreigner.* This word seems to have become a bad word. At this very moment our betters in the Lord lose time and sleep trying to find new terms to designate old things. It seems as though "the name is the thing". Seventy-five years ago "foreign" was a good word down Mexico way. To be a foreigner was an asset. The missionary's social status was better because he was a foreigner. ("What will the foreign nations say if they know that you did not wash the back of your ears to come to school!"). There was a sense of cultural inferiority in those countries. The missionary was regarded as a superior being in terms of culture because he was a citizen of "a civilized nation". (The anti-Yankee "Ariel" of Rodó does not appear until 1900). The missionary was welcome not as an Ambassador of Christ but rather as an American and in spite of his being a Protestant. In those days there was the hypnosis of the exotic among the Latins. One has only to remember the great Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the father of education in Argentina, who as President-elect of his country "imported" a score of North American female teachers to organize a system of Normal Schools, long before the influence of John Dewey and his instrumentalism was felt in those latitudes.

Those were the "bold Normal School teachers" who went "into an unknown country to help Sarmiento establish a modern system of education". They were twenty-three, recruited from New England and the Middle West. Among them, Juanita Howard from Boston. Jennie

E. Howard went to Córdoba which one hundred years ago was a sort of "wild country". She was assigned to the local girls' school. Now across the street the Jesuits had their own institution on whose entrance there was a sign: "This is the house of God and the gate of heaven". And so very soon somebody had written on the wall of Juanita's school: "This is the house of the Devil and the gate of hell".

The missionaries of the 80's were "super men" in the eyes of the natives; they were prodigious people from distant and marvellous lands; they carried a halo of positive difference that gave them prestige in spite of their heterodoxy. The Bible men were *personae gratae* both among the Liberals (the case of Dr. Mora in Mexico is one among several) and also among Roman Catholic dignitaries (as it happened in Bogotá, Colombia). Often the Mission posts were regarded by the public as schools. Even a generation afterwards, the town worthies would speak of "The school that don Juan Howland opened in San José Park. . .", which in effect was the "Divine Savior" church, in Guadalajara, Jalisco.

6 *The missionary as a sectarian.* There has been criticism to the effect that the missionaries exported and implanted the so called "divisions". Of course, the criticism is anachronic. In those days the only churches exportable were sectarian and divided. Perhaps, the concept and the nature of the sect should be reexamined. One forgets that the idea of sect is involved in the idea of "free church" as per contrast with established church. Sometimes, one forgets his Puritanic ancestry, for fear of the witches. Even today the "sects" are the safety valve capable of impeding the explosion of ecclesiasticism. Nowadays it would be elegant to speak of the sects as from the pinnacle of church unity. But in historic Protestantism every church is a sect, geometrically, where the *Una et Sancta* is invisible, and a matter of Ideal, of a tomorrow that never comes, for if it did, there would be the end of history. . .

And so, the Americans came to That Other America and made it Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and what not. But in so doing they also gave us Latins the knowledge of God, they uncovered Christ for us. The simile of the banana would describe the phenomenon. The peel is indispensable to keep the fruit sweet and ready to eat. It is better than modern cellophane.

7 The Transit from Missions to Mission. There is a rather large grain of salt in the proposition “From Missions to Mission”; but one must beware of brilliant phrases. Rhetoric should not be allowed to manicure truth. One gets the impression that Mission in the singular is better than in the plural. Mission so conceived would be an enterprise, a project, of the Church, and the Church. . . . a Corporation (see 18). But historically, and by all means at the beginnings of the missionary movement in the United States, Mission in the singular was a personal, private, intimate affair, and it became plural because there were so many affairs of the kind, as many as there were missionaries. Missionaries went to the field at times in spite of the Church. The missionary societies rose *ex post facto*, when the missionaries were already abroad. The command was from God to a given individual. Missionaries went forth to save people: to save them literally and realistically from the flames of hell (The reality and nature of Hell should be reexamined in so far as belief in it was a powerful motive of missionary endeavor). They did not go to found churches (The churches happened automatically as soon as there were two or three mentioning the Name). The Church needs no establishment; it appears *ipso facto, ex nihilo* so to speak, as soon as there are two or three with the Christ mind. Here is the mystery of the multiplication of the loaves. As a matter of spirit, the sent one, the missionary, is already a church in that he carries in his entrails a church *in embryo*: the holy will to convert and the spiritual power to create Christ among the non-believers.

8 Mission as an objective sending. Let us define the sender. Nowadays it means the American Church, and Church means a mission board. We are now clamoring for oneness, for the sake of oneness. Now we would merge many boards into one single board which would do the sending *in toto* (v. 18). Thus the inefficient, divided, sinful, pluralistic missions would become Mission with a capital M, united, pragmatic and efficient and of course, monolithic, like that Roman *De Propaganda Fide*, with its single treasury and its well coordinated command. This is the modern, contemporary way. Of course there were the old ways of Isaiah 6, where God almighty himself in person is the sender. “Go and tell this people, Hear ye. . . .” The object of the sending is a telling, a preaching. And preaching, like faith with Luther, is a matter of acoustics; but it is also a reflection of Christ. Of course in our day and in the presence of technology the accent falls on the physical resources. Service, the feeding of the hungry, education, medicine, etc., is regarded as preaching also. But now sending has

acquired a collateral meaning. Once it was exclusively a sending -- self-sending -- of souls; now it is primarily a sending of things: a sending of money. But alas, money does not ache.

9 *The Church-Christ Equation.* As soon as Christ becomes two or three His Church is there. *Ubi Christus ibi Ecclesia.* In this sense Church is equal to Christ. In so far as it creates Christ. . . and Church, Preaching is Sacrament. In this, the preacher, the missionary, is anterior and prior to Church, since he is the Christ-bearer and the Christ-producer. In this creation, now in Hispanic America, the missionary was on his own, alone among the Ninivites, *incommunicado*, for by now his home base was far far away. There were no missionary compounds, but the *Nephilim* were in the earth in those days. The influence of their personality is felt even now. Their memory is a living presence. Two years ago LA NUEVA DEMOCRACIA printed a series of articles by the renowned Argentinian intellectual Dr. Bernardo González Arigli on "The Life and Miracles of Mr. Morris". But William C. Morris died on his bed. His colleague in Christ John Luther Stephens was hacked to death together with brother J. J. Islas, a recent convert. Stephens, like Morris believed in education as a means. We read from one of his reports: "I have been here, in Ahualulco, for almost a month. As soon as I arrived I opened a day school for children and another for adults in the evening. . . Now I have 14 children by day and 43 adults by night. . . My sermons are not written. Bible in hand I explain some chapter or preach about some theme like the doctrine of forgiveness, or the new life. I speak for no less than an hour, and sometimes for one hour and a half. . . I brought 200 Bibles and Testaments, which I sell. My living room is also a reading room, where many come to read. . . There was some opposition at the beginning. . . they would throw stones or shoot their guns while I was preaching, but now all is quiet and I sleep as safe as in California. . ."

10 *The creation of the Christian community.* The function of the missionary was to create the community, not to tend the ensuing church. Missionaries, as a rule, make poor pastors. The range of the pastorate -- and, anyway, there were no pastorates -- would be too limited for the outreach of a giant of God. Andrew Murray Milne circumnavigated South America touching the ports of Venezuela, Ecuador, Perú and Chile and made trips to the hinterland of Matto Grosso and Paraguay, went 200 miles up the Magdalena River, crossed the cordilleras of Colombia and the high Andes of Perú to reach the sources of the Amazon. His goal

was to distribute one million Bibles and portions. Actually he distributed 850,000 in his forty-three years of service for the honorable British Bible Society. Milne was the missionary as a Bible man.

Now consider the missionary as a Seminary President and the case of Alfred Clarence Wright. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent him to Northern Mexico and he went to Cusihuiriachic -- the "Place of the Singing Tree". His Diary furnishes some statistics, as follows: "A summary of activities in 1888 is: Services held, 106; total attendance, 3,857; baptisms, 2 infants, 3 adults; one marriage; one church organized with 16 members; Evangelical services were held for the first time in 3 places. We (he and Mrs. Wright) re-in Cusihuiriachic two years, and when we left the church, which we had organized, had about twenty-five members. There were also believers in several ranches and villages in the surrounding country. . . ."

Another accomplishment was not visible immediately, for in Cusihuiriachic the first theological seminary of the Congregationalist Churches in Mexico was born, as an exploit of this man who foresaw the concrete presence of a Mexican church and who from the very beginning of his preaching began to create ministers to tend flocks that at the moment were only matters of dream. . . On his several nine-month circuit trips through the sierras and *barrancas* of Chihuahua he would carry a theological library in his saddlebags. The Wright technique was to make a preacher out of the convert, even before he was converted. . . . And so, about twenty of those trained on the stirrup so to speak, became Congregationalist ministers. In those Sierra Madre adventures one would discover the metaphysical tension between *Kerygma* and *Ekklesia*, since Church is sedentary while Preaching is dynamic. Inertia impels Church to become club, where the elect are indolent and fellowship displaces warfare on the frontier.

11 *The Seminal Christ.* Christ Our Lord as the holy seed of the Spirit is not a metaphor, but a factic reality. It is the *trans-Mission* of the saving Idea from person to person, as from master to disciple. It is a very personal act. It is not a collective, nor corporate, promotion. It is not the work of the Church as a whole but of the churchman as an individual. In this sense, *Mission* is more than Church. The Christian community is the cosmic stuff out of which the church arises as a historical fact. Community at its minimal dimension is a dialogue, between an "I" and a "Thou", with Christ between (Cf. the Martin

Buber dialogue without Christ). Conversion is an individual motion. Pentecost comes after the Upper Room. Take for instance the coming of the Gospel into Puerto Rico:

"Not very much is known about Mr. I. Heiliger, and only a little more is known of his friend and disciple Antonio Badillo, yet we must begin the narrative of events in the Presbyterian field in Puerto Rico with these two gentlemen. Officially the Church opened its work on April 15, 1899. . .but Heiliger began his work in 1860. . . Heiliger was an English trader. He was accustomed to visit the port now known as Aguadilla, on the northern coast of Puerto Rico. . . When Heiliger came to port he was amazed, being a Christian gentleman, that he was not permitted to carry a Bible and that there was no place where he could worship according to his own belief. He therefore returned on a subsequent trip prepared to stay, with not only a Bible in his own English tongue, but also one in Spanish. He purchased a farm not many miles from the shore in a district known as Maleza Alta. Here he prospered and built barns and storage houses for his crops, but his real object was to teach religion, religious liberty and the use of the Holy Scriptures. His most apt pupil, later an intimate friend, was Antonio Badillo, who first learned of Heiliger's religion when he sold him a basket of fruit, putting good fruit on top of the basket and bad at the bottom. Badillo was surprised when Heiliger nevertheless continued to do business with him. He inquired why. The answer to his question led to his becoming an earnest student of the Christian religion. Badillo first learned to read, then learned what to read. . ." Etcetera. (Edward A. Odell: *It came to pass*. New York. pp. 13,14).

12 *The apostolic succession.* A biological approach to the permanent presence of Christianity appears already in the early Fathers who spoke of the *Spermatic Holy Ghost* as the transmission belt that maintains all life and passes it over from father to son and from generation to generation. Take for instance the missionary technique of the author of the book just mentioned. When he went to Cuba and the Caribbean he had a very clear rational dream. He prayed, more or less: "Oh Lord, grant me that in the span of my life I may prepare one hundred boys for the ministry of Thy Church in these islands. . ." It was not a question of converting one hundred people, but of training one hundred converters. Today that man has seen with his own eyes the fulfillment of the dream: there are more than one hundred disciples of Edward A. Odell manning the ramparts of the Lord in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo and even

in the Spanish communities of New York, Chicago and California.

13 The Indigenous Church. This adjective, of course is tautological; *all* churches are indigenous. But its use reveals the state of semantic sinfulness that nowadays, praise Heaven, is driving us to reconsider concepts and even to alter names. At any rate, "Indigenous" was a substitute for "native" and "national" in view of the fact that "national" has political and even subversive connotations. What is more, the term is a geographical interpretation of Something that is beyond Space and Time. It is a contradiction to Ecumenics. The Church eternal is wherever Christ is. In this sense there are no churches geographical but one and only divine congregation. Indigenous, Younger, New, whatever adjective be used, indicates a dividing line: it predicates in any event older Christians on the one hand and newer Christians on the other. Of course, in Christ there is no time. Again, the term indicated the foreignness of the sent ones and the "nateness" of the recipients of the Word. That nomenclature went against Nature, so to speak. Against the nature of the Message and the Spirit of the Sender. In the last analysis, the difference in question was one of culture in the sense of civilization. The European missionaries were Christians-plus; they were civilized besides being Christian.

14 The question of culture. The question of culture relates to the container rather than to the essence. Indigenous and foreign refer to geography rather than to people. Nowadays the sending church is foreign to the indigenous one, in terms of geography, but in terms of humanity there is no difference. And when there is, it is artificial, as for instance my broken English, or your guttural Spanish. (In Seoul the communication was established by the word "Jesus" between the Presbyterian banker and the Korean usher). Missionary language as a sign is culture; but its meaning is Gospel. Beware of missionaries who master the languages and of natives without an accent, because in both cases they are in the realm of culture, which is other than the realm of Gospel.

Vis-a-vis Latin America, the word culture may mean two different and opposite things: (a) It is the domain of pre-hispanic life, language, mores, art, which is a very concrete part of the situation: the sum total of living religion which European Christianity has not been able to displace yet. It is the idols behind the altars and the sacred places where the Indian deities of half a millennium ago still reside and live. This is

the culture that the Bible translator deals with in Oaxaca and Mayaland and Perú. This is the culture of the countryside, where Tepostón reigns supreme.

15 European culture in Latin America. (b) This is the culture of the metropolis and the universities. It is the Mediterranean culture incorporated in the Spanish language and the Iberian tradition. It is the famous "Hispanidad" which one links usually with General Franco and the Roman Catholic Church. The Mediterranean man is different, they tell us, from the Anglo Saxon and the Viking. There are counterpoints galore: Don Quijote versus Robinson Crusoe, with John A. Mackay; Ariel and Calibán with the Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó. Ortega y Gasset will tell you that the German thinkers are clear and direct while the Latins -- Italians and French -- are nebulous, abstract and obscure. There has been talk of Yankee engineers as against Latin American poets, among those who have not read Whitman or Poe. All these comparisons prove weak because, culture aside, there is no significant difference between peoples, if one follows the Pauline approach to the problem of an alien culture at Mars Hill (Acts 17: 26). That we are brothers, alike under the skin, is a biological fact, even in terms of culture. Cultures intermix. Miscegenation is the law of contiguity. Cultures have common denominators that point to a universal psyche.

One does not notice, for instance, the Protestant ingredient that is present in the Hispanic psyche, since long before the Reformation. Priscillianus, bishop of Avila, beheaded by Maximus at Treves (385 A.D.), made the first attempt at higher criticism of the New Testament, and is regarded by Paret and Menéndez Pelayo as a forerunner of Protestantism. André Siegfried speaks of that "virtual Protestantism" that was latent in European thought during the whole Medieval period, meaning the spirit of investigation and criticism concomitant with the spirit of freedom that never dies. (V. his answer to Daniel-Rops in the French Academy.)

16 The Protestant Impact on Contemporary Catholicism. But never mind the past. The Protestant ingredient is very present in 20th Century Spanish life. Miguel de Unamuno the great Iberian, whose books adorn the *Index Expurgatorius*, is regarded among philosophers as a Kierkegaardian -- Don Miguel learned Danish in order to study Kierkegaard --, but actually Unamuno is a Lutheran in theology and as such was excommunicated. Today the spirit of Unamuno rules in the thought of twenty

countries and his theological ideas are definitely Protestant.

What is more, contemporary Spanish writers like the renowned José Luis Aranguren (v. his "Catholicism and Protestantism as Forms of Existence") maintain that at present the Roman Catholic Church is undergoing a very visible process of "protestantization". There is an open reformation movement afoot. The reformation calls for the dissemination of the Bible and the rebuilding of the liturgy and the regeneration of the laity for the extension of the Gospel.

What is more, there is a new crop of Roman Catholic priests and missionaries afield. Among the North Americans, the Maryknoll order is most visible in Latin America. The Roman Church has gone "missionary" in the Protestant sense. The new generation of young priest is also evident in Spain proper. Father J. L. Martin Descalzo is an example of the Spanish new leadership. He has written recently a prize winning novel "La Frontera de Dios" -- ("The Frontier of God") -- where he deals with the problems of religion in a town where the parish priest has been an atheist all his life. The author explains at the beginning that although his book gives a bad picture of them, "the priests of "The Frontier of God" are not the Church. . ."

Of course you are aware of the same tendency in this country, where Catholicism in its most ample spirit tends to become a "denomination", like the Protestant ones. Simultaneously, of course, by the law of *corsi e ricorsi*, we have the Romanization of free Protestantism wherever ritualism lays hold of our left of center churches.

17 *The Economics of the Evangelical community.* Economics is culture: agriculture and technology. It has to do with the material things that, as God given, are holy. Philanthropy becomes a by-product where Christ is truly the Bread of Life as conceived in the Lord's Prayer of Tertullian's times when "our daily bread" did not mean food but Christ himself. And so when the Kingdom (realm of Spirit) comes, all other things (realm of Matter) are added to the subjects thereof. . . Christ-Creator multiplies the loaves in the community. "Catholic pedagogy does not advise to defend oneself against Protestantism, nor to refute it, nor to attack it, but to excel it. . . Protestantism must be excelled in its methods, because in these lies the reason for its proselytistic efficacy. . . Protestantism knows how to relate the content of the Evangelical message to the actual problems of the human being. . .", says the eminent Argentinian Jesuit Father Victorio M. Bonamín in his

essay "Protestantism as a Lesson of Methodology". (*Didascalia*. Rosario. Argentina. August 1956). We have the record of three consecutive generations in most Latin American countries and are able even to draw the graph of wealth growth as a function of spiritual rebirth. The Gospel comes to the poor, and in the course of a generation it transforms them first into freemen men, and then, in the next generation, into freeholders, or proprietary members of a middle class. On the third generation, the millionaires appear. In Mexico we have the famous "chocolate king" with his purse always open to church causes. . . Of a Sunday, the faithful come to Sunday School in their own Chevrolets and even Cadillacs. Etcetera.

18 *The transit from abject poverty to an upper middle class level has been effected even in the course of one generation; even in the life span of an individual.* There is the example of the Indian boy from Western Mexico who in 1921 walked some three hundred miles to Guadalajara, to apply for admission to the American Board school for boys (Colegio Internacional). When he arrived he was a sight of utter poverty. His *huaraches* or sandals were in pieces and his pants in rags. He finished the high school course and later the Union Seminary's in Mexico City; but after a while he left the ministry. So he went on his own as a teacher and with his wife opened a private school in Sinaloa, which became a center of culture in the community and, to boot, a financial success to its owners, even into this day.

19 *The Mission schools as transmission belts.* Education has had a function in the missionary enterprise as a pre-Text to the Holy Text. At the beginning school and church were one. (The tradition is alive to-day in Cuba where the community school adjoins the Methodist temple and the local pastor is the Principal of the school). Grammar and Arithmetic were handmaidens of the Bible. Chapel was above laboratory. Teaching was in fact disguised preaching. The object of Protestant education was to create Christ in the heart of the students. Of course this does not mean that the process signified formal conversion. But it meant the penetration of the society around the Protestant community. Every student became a germ bearer of the Gospel spirit and, in a measure, of the missionary's culture (Consider the great number of citizens who sent and still send their children to the Protestant school to learn English). Every parent who sent their children there did so disobeying the explicit orders of his own Catholic Church. In this level, the school is not yet an institution; it is rather,

the man (or woman) in charge who radiates his Christ in works rather than in lessons. Ambassador Víctor Andrade would remember, forty years after his egress from the Methodist Institute at La Paz, that the Principal's wife washed her own dishes, in a society of cheap labor and peonage.

The education process thus affected the environment of the upper level of society. The missionaries arrived with their schools at a moment when education was at its lowest levels in most countries to the South. Father Prudencio Damboriena, S.I., who has studied "the Protestant problem" in Hispanic America, writing from Rome, says: "Naturally, one must begin by taking into account the silent but tenacious labors of the missionary societies during a whole century of expansion. While we Catholics went to sleep on our laurels, they were preparing their instruments and infiltrating certain social strata, and making themselves indispensable in such delicate terrains as that of education. . . On awakening we come to realize that we have them much at home among us. . . Metaphor aside, we stand in South America face to face with Anglo American Protestantism which means to repeat with its neighbors to the South what its ancestor did to Europe in the sixteenth century. We face a true invasion, systematic and perfectly synchronized and perfectly planned. . ." (*Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*. Madrid. August 1956) Thus, the schools have functioned as media of "indirect illumination" that has been carrying and is still carrying the Light to those in the outer fringes of the millions who still sit in darkness as far as Christ is concerned, for though "baptized" they have no religious life: liberals, progressives, masons, free-thinkers, University professors, etc. upon whom the traditional church has no claim other than that they were baptized at birth. Now consider the phenomenon of *direct illumination*.

20 *Preaching and congregation-building.* Preaching has acted as a transforming élan of the economic life of the so called lower classes. Conversion means a new birth, the rejuvenation of the soul in question, the betterment of the physical man. The changing of the *pysche* involves the transformation of the *physis* also. Where Christ appears poverty flees away. Christ is also physical health and the Christian becomes a new specimen of humanity. Carl G. Jung would have it that, biologically speaking, "Christianity produces in effect a new species: a creature that lives differently, so that natural man is unable to overcome her, just as a reptile is unable to fly. The Christian creature

behaves in a different manner from that which she has left behind; the new behavior translates itself into new desires, new possibilities, new potentialities and new realizations. . . Such a new man exists, for we meet him every day. . .” (*Psychological Reflections*. New York. 1953.)

21 *The “new man” in Chile.* One would be tempted to think that the eminent psychoanalyst had Protestant Chile in mind when he wrote that. In Chile more than in any place else one comes to apprehend the tangible, concrete, physical nature of that Thing called the Holy Ghost. One deals here with the “materialistic” aspect of Christianity as defined by Ralph Demos of Harvard: “Christianity may be aptly described as the most materialistic of religions because of the fact that it denies any essential opposition between eternity and time, between the spirit and the flesh. . .” (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Buffalo. September 1958). The paradox is there: the Gospel is for the poor but as soon as the Gospel takes hold, the poor disappear, since they become rich. The process is not one of “social justice” nor even of philanthropy which is almsgiving. (Philanthropy and Social Justice have become proper functions of the State, which to that extent becomes Christian). It is rather a creation: it is the wealth-producing activity of the twice-born. In Chile, the Protestants or *Canutos* have established a national reputation for honesty and sobriety. You see in the daily newspapers advertisements for so many journeymen, specifying that they must be “*Canutos*”. In part, the non-drinking *Canuto* has been a factor in the industrialization of Chile, for the average workman who gets drunk of a Saturday night when he gets his pay, is not fit to report to work on Monday, thus making impossible the continuity of the mechanical processes. The Chilean Christian, a creature of the Gospel, becomes creator in the sense that his spiritual achievement concretizes itself in economic and social fact.

22 *The emergence of the Protestant community.* The human ground of God’s Church in Latin America appears to be threefold: (1) The poor to whom the Word was preached directly; (2) the well-to-do who sent their children to our schools; (3) the new Evangelical generation that has grown in numbers and spread through the thick and thin of the national life. The new generation represents the sum total of those under the spell of the Gospel both inside and outside our temples and church buildings. This Protestant community is known for its literacy, for its intellectuality and even for its erudition (“Is he an orator? -- Well, he is a Protestant and as you know, all Protestants are orators. . .”)

Today, most large churches have an intellectual life of their own. The churches, both city and country, are constantly feeding the lay Universities with Protestant young people training for the major professions: Medicine, Law, Engineering, Pharmacy. And so our congregations are replete with professionals. . . Last year in Mexico City this writer was meeting a Presbyterian young man who came to shake hands with him, after the sermon. "And pray tell, what do you do?" And he answered: "I am a biologist, Ph. D. from the University of Missouri". And that evening of the same Sunday one was congratulating Srita. Bertha, a Nazarene, for her recent award of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Chemistry. At present she is head of an important department at the National University. But of a Sunday she is the coloratura at her church's choir.

In most countries the Protestant population of the local Universities is rather large. Every year Protestant graduates of the various professions have a ceremony at a local church which is called the "Consecration of the Diplomas". They march in full academic array to the altar and there surrender their recently acquired degrees at the feet of their Lord and Master. On the occasion the address is delivered by a University professor who at times may be an agnostic, or even a marxist. Several years ago, a very radical professor delivered such an address at First Baptist Church in Havana, Cuba and he reported afterwards that he had had an agonizing experience, for in the middle of his discourse he "was caught by the spirit of Protestantism", by a sort of "invisible but inevitable influence, like hypnotism, or perhaps auto-suggestion", so that at the climax he was actually talking in Evangelical terms that had surged forth "from the depths of my unconscious". In fact he was preaching even if he was not a convert. . . yet.

The phrase "Youth movement" has come to mean a very limited fringe of the Protestant youth as such, meaning the young people who operate within given local churches under the spiritual direction of the pastor thereof. The several efforts among students of the Universities seem to be direct and to mean to serve youth directly and not through the local churches. Be that as it may, last year your servant attended a strictly denominational youth rally at a certain church in Mexico City where about 90 per cent of the 300 present were actually young: people mostly in their twenties. Out of the ranks of this young sector of the community have come the thousands of preachers, pastors and teachers who today minister to five million Evangelicals in twenty countries.

23 *The metaphor of the umbilical cord.* Or, the relation of “sending” to “receiving” church. “Sending” has come to mean an agency, a board. But as we have said before, in the beginning individuals (missionaries) sent themselves, went of their own accord, sent directly by their Christ. The boards appear in the last century, here in America, to help couples who wanted to go abroad. Help meant transportation, the chartering of a boat to carry a small group to Bombay, via the Cape of Good Hope. At times the boards would function without the approval of the local church. “Receiving church” means now the Body of Christ created by the missionaries in foreign lands. Since then the American Church has become more scientific minded about it, what with its philosophies of intensive training and its antiseptic preparation of candidates. And we are worrying about the name “missionary”, and about the term “foreign”, and at times we are so naive that we proceed actually to change the name forgetting Goethe who said “He who meddles with my name meddles with my soul”.

The metaphor violates the law of contradiction. A relation involves two entities. But the older and the newer churches are one and the same church. They are cells of the same Body, organs of the same Organism. In this sense the ideology of Ecumenism is a *petitio principii*, for it begs the question.

24 *Mission as a Corporation.* Now one hears of the missionaries taking a secondary position. At Whitby, the Oriental delegates brought forth the thesis of the Regular (native) Army as against the Irregular (foreign) militia. This approach can not be legitimized. Even some of the Secretaries here present think of training missionaries to serve under natives, meaning as employees of a native church. Correction: the more one serves under an organization the less one is able to detect the will of God in Christ. Of course the “under” refers to organization and working technique, but in matters religious there is an autonomy that proceeds from the intimate vinculum with Christ. This formula predicates a “professional missionary”, and a “professional native”. It predicates a native community that is already there. If so, the missionary does not go to create Christ but to nurture Church. It may mean a “native” hierarchy and the dictum that “The field is always right”. The sent one thus goes to work for a corporation. A paper of certain policy and strategy committee even suggests the term “Foundation” for the missionary enterprise: “Some have suggested that many of the functions performed by the Missions Board could best

be done by an organization calling itself a Foundation, and that the overseas work of the churches could learn a great deal from the functioning of the more advanced of the great Foundations. . ." (V. "The Significance of the Mission Board in the Modern World", by Alford Carleton. Appendix H, Policy and Strategy Committee, April 14, 1958.)

25 *The "Emancipation" of the native Church.* While among the sending churches the thinking gravitates on "mergers", "integration" and "togetherness", among the younger ones there is talk of "emancipation". This term should be ugly in a spiritual context, for it predicates a previous condition of servitude. Of course the figure refers to finances and self support. The following is translated from a recent pastoral letter read by the Most Reverend Bishop Egmont Machado Kirschke (Episcopal) to the 60th. Council of the Diocesis of Southern Brasil (Episcopal). Discussing "Our Situation", he said in part:

"We are sure that emancipation is, more than anything else, a fruit of growth and of maturity. It is true that these two phenomena occur in time even though time may not condition them. Just as among individuals biological age does not always coincide with chronological age, just so likewise institutions do not develop all in the same cycle of time. What, then, is our state of growth and maturity now that we are entering into our seventh decade of missionary endeavor?

"When we go deep into the study of the situation of our church in Brasil we come to realize that its lack of self-sufficiency has causes more complex and basic than the pure and simple economico-financial question. They are primary and fundamental causes which, if they are not taken care of in a spirit of understanding and humility, will continue to destroy our energies and our time.

"In order that a church may grow with vigor and reach its majority it is necessary that its spiritual power manifest itself in a three-fold way: Evangelism, Indoctrination and a Sense of responsibility. . . And we must recognize penitently the fact that, with a few and imperfect exceptions, there has always prevailed in our ranks a certain tendency to apathy and routine. But such evils never happen by themselves. They proceed from something deeper and more serious which finds its roots in the very bases of orientation which have prevailed among us. . .

"On a certain occasion our presiding Bishop Dom Henry K. Sherrill said that we need to have more of the spirit of the sect. Now, we know

the fervor with which the members of the sects hold to given points of doctrine, and how they study them and proclaim them, with an ample measure of Bible quotations in good or bad season, and how in that manner they create a strong sense of church, and then a strong sense of personal responsibility towards that church. However, for good or ill, our case is different. We are not moved by theological peculiarities since, together with all the communions of Christianity, we accept the Creeds of the Church indivisible. But on the other hand, the absence of these doctrinal peculiarities demands a certain compensation of a psychological nature in order to maintain on high the grade of religious exaltation. Some have found such a derivative in their war without quarter against the Church of Rome. . . . This emotional state has been disastrous in that it has compelled some to look with distrust and even with hostility at many elements of worship which we hold in common with that church. This is a negative position which does not save anyone for eternity, and it is sad to observe that for many churchmen of ours, religion means aversion to Rome rather than love of their own church. . . .

“Brethren, let us do not deceive ourselves. We shall not gather the material benefits of our financial emancipation unless we destroy that apathy that has been impeding the march of the church as a result of the cold and colorless manner in which She has been presented to our people. . . .” (*A Nossa situação*. Estandarte Cristão. June 1958. Porto Alegre. Brasil.)